

ISSUE NO. 15

LAS LOMITAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

NOVEMBER 2026

SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER



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A Season of Gratitude

As we enter November, I've been reflecting on the many people who make Las Lomitas such a special place to learn, work, and grow.

First, thank you to our Board of Trustees for their thoughtful leadership throughout the **Field of Dreams** discussions, which brought together students, families, staff, and community members. With the Board's selection of a preferred design, we're moving toward submitting our $8.5 million state grant application in December. There's work ahead and no guarantees, but I'm excited about the possibility of transforming La Entrada's outdoor space into something truly special.

Speaking of gratitude: after 20 years of dedicated service, our extraordinary Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation, **Joyce Massero**, will retire at the end of December. Joyce has shaped our schools in countless ways, both visible and behind the scenes. We'll have much more to say in the weeks ahead, but for now, please join me in thanking her for two decades of remarkable service.

November also brings **parent-teacher conferences**, a chance to strengthen the partnership between home and school. These conversations are about more than grades. They're a chance to celebrate each child's growth and understand their strengths and needs. Come with questions, share what you're seeing at home, and partner with our teachers.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful month of t(T)hanksgiving, and thank you for caring so deeply about our children and schools.

Erik Burmeister
Superintendent

Message from the Board President



On behalf of the Board, thank you for your generosity and partnership

Last month, the Board took an exciting step forward in our **Field of Dreams** project by selecting a design for La Entrada. Our District staff and the **City of Menlo Park**, including Councilmember Jennifer Wise, City Manager Justin Murphy, and Deputy City Manager Nick Szegda, have been essential partners, along with AYSO, Alpine Little League, Sequoia Healthcare District, and the Las Lomitas Education Foundation (LLEF).

As the **LLEF Annual Campaign** continues, thank you to everyone who has already given! There's even more reason to give now: **the Apple for the Classroom incentive has been extended through November 18**. For donations made by then, the first $200 for each student in your family goes directly to their grade level for field trips and unique learning experiences. If you haven't yet given, please consider contributing today.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your generosity and partnership.

Kimberly Legg
President, LLESD Board of Trustees

Field of Dreams: Board Selects Option 3

At its October 14 meeting, the Board of Trustees voted 4–1 to move forward with Option 3 for the Field of Dreams improvements at La Entrada, following months of planning and feedback from more than 600 survey participants.

The Board seriously considered a regulation-size track and would likely have chosen one had the space accommodated it and the cost not been so significant, about $1.4 million beyond available grant funding. Option 3 offered the best balance of recreation, green space, community priorities, and fiscal responsibility. See the full design on the next page.

What's next?

The District and City of Menlo Park are finalizing an application for up to $8.5 million through California's Proposition 4 Community Parks Program.

First, the City must approve an authorizing resolution, and the City and District must sign a 30-year lease formalizing community recreation use after school, on weekends, and in summer, continuing our existing Joint Use Agreement.

The application is due December 16, 2026, with awards expected in late spring or early summer 2027. Funding is not guaranteed, but if awarded, the project would enter a multi-year design and construction process. The grant would cover the core field and track improvements. Portable classroom removal and playground equipment would need separate funding. Additional phases, including the baseball field, tennis courts, parking, and a possible dog park, will be considered once we know the outcome.

Our goal is a lasting community asset that serves students, families, and neighbors for generations to come.

Field of Dreams: A Closer Look at Option 3

Option 3 Features

- A multi-use natural grass field
- An all-weather track
- Expanded open green space
- A larger playground adjacent to the fourth- and fifth-grade building

Survey respondents particularly valued the playground's size and location.

Want to learn more?

Review the Board presentation to explore all three designs and the survey results, or watch the October 14 Board meeting (beginning at 2:44:05) to hear the Trustees' discussion and decision.

Thank you to everyone who helped shape this vision for La Entrada.



Learning Community Updates



LLESD K–8 Math Curriculum Pilot Kicks Off

LLESD is excited to kick off our K–8 mathematics curriculum pilot and adoption process! Over the coming months, we will explore and evaluate new instructional materials to support high-quality mathematics teaching and learning across our district, with implementation planned for the 2027–28 school year.

Community input is an important part of this process! Families and students will have opportunities to review materials and share feedback as we work together to select a mathematics program that supports the needs of all learners. We look forward to sharing updates and opportunities for involvement throughout the year!



Share Your Thoughts on AI

As AI opens up exciting new possibilities and important questions for education, Las Lomitas is committed to approaching it thoughtfully. We want our students to build the digital literacy, critical thinking, and curiosity they'll need, while keeping privacy, safety, and human connection at the heart of our schools.

To guide our Superintendent's Advisory Committee on AI and shape district policy, teaching practices, and family resources, we want to hear from you. Whether you use AI every day or are new to the conversation, your feedback as a parent or guardian will help us build a community-aligned path forward.

Please take a few minutes to complete our brief survey: Take the LLESD Family AI Perception Survey

Apple for the Classroom Extended to November 18

Good news for LLEF Annual Campaign supporters: Apple for the Classroom now runs through November 18. Investments made by then will send the first $200 per student in your family straight to their grade level, funding field trips and unique learning experiences for every class. See teacher wishlists and invest today.

Every Child Matters, Every Day: Celebrating Attendance at Las Lomitas

At Las Lomitas Elementary, our vision is simple and deeply meaningful: **"Every child matters, every child belongs, and every child thrives."** Bringing that vision to life takes daily, intentional work, and our progress in student attendance offers a reason to celebrate.

Our chronic absenteeism rate has dropped from 8.9% in 2023 to 3.4% in 2026!

Behind these numbers are relationships, conversations, and a shared commitment to understanding what our students and families need.

Every Child Matters

Site administration has made attendance a focused priority, working closely with our office team and teachers to monitor patterns and stay connected with families. This includes proactive communication about the importance of attendance, as well as timely, personal follow-up when absences become a concern.

Just as importantly, it means looking beyond the numbers. We take time to get to know our families, listen to their experiences, and understand the obstacles that may make regular attendance difficult. Our approach begins with care and a willingness to work together, not assumptions about why a child is absent.



Every Child Belongs

A phone call, a personal check-in, or a conversation about a family's circumstances provides an opportunity to strengthen trust. We want families to know that their children are valued, that their presence matters, and that school is a place where they are welcomed and supported.

A special thank-you goes to **Assistant Principal Heather Smith** and **Office Assistant Flora** for their thoughtful outreach and consistent follow-through. Together with our teachers, staff, and families, they have helped keep relationships at the center of this work.



Every Child Thrives

Our goal is not simply fewer absences. It is more opportunities for children to learn, build friendships, develop confidence, and participate in their school community.

We are proud of this progress, and we know the work continues. By maintaining focused attention, communicating consistently, and partnering with families to understand and address barriers, we will continue turning our vision into practice.

Intentionality makes a difference. Thank you to our entire Lion Family for helping every child matter, belong, and thrive.

Apple For The Classroom Extended thru 11/18



We invite teachers to submit requests for special projects, innovative materials, and unique learning experiences that bring education to life. When you invest in our schools through LLEF before October 30th, the first $200 of your investment per student automatically goes directly to funding their teacher's wishlist during this school year.

Sample Wishlist

- [ ] Field trip - $1400
- [ ] Volunteering Event - $2000
- [ ] Science presentation - $1200
- [ ] Creation Station - $1000
- [ ] Visiting Artist - $1800
- [ ] Dramatic Play - $2000

"Apple for the Classroom has elevated how our Leopards experience learning. Students take trips to museums, hear from expert guest speakers who bring their subjects to life, and experience an in-house planetarium show right at school. **These aren't just fun extras — they're the moments that turn curiosity into real understanding.** That's the power of hands-on, inquiry-based learning, and AFTC makes that possible."

- Tish Whiteley, Principal, La Entrada

When you invest by November 18 your child's grade gets funded by May 15.

Invest today at www.llef.org/invest



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Stay Connected

Important Dates

November 9-10, 12-13
Minimum Day/Conferences

Wednesday, November 11
Veteran's Day

Wednesday, November 18
Apple for the Classroom deadline

November 23-27
Thanksgiving Break

District Links

Superintendent Contact
eburmeister@llesd.org

Board Contact
schoolboard@llesd.org
Kimberly Legg: klegg@llesd.org

District Website
https://www.llesd.org

Las Lomitas PTA
https://www.laslomitaspta.org

La Entrada PTA
https://www.laentradapta.org

Helpful Resources

Field of Dreams
Board presentation
Watch the October 14 Board meeting
(beginning at 2:44:05)

Share Your Thoughts on AI
LLESD Family AI Perception Survey

Las Lomitas Education Foundation
Invest today
Apple for the Classroom



Las Lomitas Elementary School District
Inclusive. Engaging. Inspiring.